

STATE OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 26-33

(Emergency Management – Impacts of Winter Weather, Droughts, and Wildfire Risks)

WHEREAS, from January 31 to February 3, 2026, a powerful wintertime cold front moved across Florida, subjecting the entire State to prolonged freezing temperatures; and

WHEREAS, several Central and South Florida locations set new record low temperatures throughout this period, with life-threatening and hazardous wind chills recorded nearly statewide; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Division of Emergency Management has coordinated with state agencies, including the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services and local partners, as well as the Chief State Meteorologist, to determine the areas affected and the potential impacts; and

WHEREAS, such prolonged freezing temperatures and extreme fluctuations in weather conditions impact Florida's agricultural industry; and

WHEREAS, facilitating an emergency harvest is essential to prevent destruction of agriculture, and the relaxation of the restrictions on commercial vehicles is necessary to transport vulnerable crops to processing sites without delay; and

WHEREAS, minimal rainfall across Florida this winter season has resulted in increasingly widespread rainfall deficits, with 60-day totals ranging from two to four inches below normal for this time of year and upwards of five to seven inches below normal along the Florida Panhandle; and

WHEREAS, severe to extreme drought extends across Florida, with more than 95% of the State now experiencing critically dry soils, stressed vegetation, and below normal streamflow; and

WHEREAS, worsening drought conditions combined with an active weather pattern have contributed to an increase in wildfire activity across the State, with approximately 120 active wildfires currently burning an estimated 9,700 acres; and

WHEREAS, temperatures are forecast to trend above normal for this time of year and rainfall chances remain limited, further exacerbating drought conditions and elevating wildland fire concerns; and

WHEREAS, as Governor of Florida, I am responsible to meet the dangers presented to Florida and its people by this emergency.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RON DESANTIS, as Governor of Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article IV, Section 1(a) of the Florida Constitution and by the Florida Emergency Management Act, as amended, and all other applicable laws, promulgate the following Executive Order, to take immediate effect:

Section 1. Because of the foregoing conditions, I declare that a major state of emergency exists in Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Broward, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Holmes, Indian River, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties.

Section 2. I designate the Executive Director of the Division of Emergency Management (“Director”) as the State Coordinating Officer for the duration of this emergency and direct him to execute the State’s Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and other response, recovery, and mitigation plans necessary to cope with the emergency. Pursuant to section 252.36(1)(a),

Florida Statutes, I delegate to the State Coordinating Officer the authority to exercise those powers delineated in section 252.36(6)-(12), Florida Statutes, which he shall exercise as needed to meet this emergency, subject to the limitations of section 252.33, Florida Statutes. In exercising the powers delegated by this Executive Order, the State Coordinating Officer shall confer with the Governor to the fullest extent practicable. The State Coordinating Officer shall also have the authority to:

A. Invoke and administer the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (“EMAC”) (sections 252.921-252.9335, Florida Statutes) and other compacts and agreements existing between the State of Florida and other states, and the further authority to coordinate the allocation of resources from such other states that are made available to Florida under such compacts and agreements so as to best meet the dangers presented by this emergency.

B. Designate Deputy State Coordinating Officers and Deputy State Disaster Recovery Coordinators, as necessary.

C. Seek direct assistance and enter into agreements with any and all agencies of the federal government as may be needed to meet this emergency.

D. Direct all state, regional, and local governmental agencies, including law enforcement agencies, to identify personnel needed from those agencies to assist in meeting the response, recovery, and mitigation needs created by this emergency, and to place all such personnel under the direct command and coordination of the State Coordinating Officer to meet this emergency.

E. Direct the actions of any state agency as necessary to implement the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s National Disaster Recovery Framework.

F. Suspend the effect of any statute, rule, or order that would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay any mitigation, response, or recovery action necessary to cope with this

emergency. In accordance with section 252.3611(1), Florida Statutes, any such order, declaration, or other action shall specify each statute or rule being amended or waived, if applicable, and the expiration date for the order or action.

G. Enter orders as may be needed to implement any of the foregoing powers; however, the requirements of sections 252.46 and 120.54(4), Florida Statutes, do not apply to any such orders issued by the State Coordinating Officer. No such order shall remain in effect beyond the expiration of this Executive Order, including any extension thereof.

Section 3. I find that the special duties and responsibilities resting upon some State, regional, and local agencies and other governmental bodies in responding to this emergency may require them to suspend or waive certain statutes, rules, ordinances and orders they administer. Therefore, I issue the following authorizations:

A. Pursuant to section 252.36(6)(a), Florida Statutes, the Executive Office of the Governor may suspend all statutes and rules affecting budgeting to the extent necessary to provide budget authority for state agencies to cope with this emergency. The requirements of sections 252.46 and 120.54(4), Florida Statutes, do not apply to any such suspension issued by the Executive Office of the Governor. No such suspension shall remain in effect beyond the expiration of this Executive Order, including any extension thereof.

B. Each state agency may suspend the provisions of any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business or the orders or rules of that agency, if strict compliance with the provisions of any such statute, order, or rule would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with the emergency. For the purposes of this Executive Order, "necessary action in coping with the emergency" means any emergency mitigation, response, or recovery action: (1) prescribed in the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan ("CEMP"); or (2) ordered by the State Coordinating Officer or designee. In accordance with

section 252.3611(1), Florida Statutes, any agency order, declaration, or other action suspending a statute or rule shall specify each statute or rule being amended or waived, if applicable, and the expiration date for the order or action. The requirements of section 120.54(4), Florida Statutes, shall not apply to any such suspension issued by a state agency. No such suspension shall remain in effect beyond the expiration of this Executive Order, including any extension thereof.

C. All state agencies entering emergency orders, emergency rules, or other emergency actions in response to this emergency shall advise the State Coordinating Officer contemporaneously or as soon as practicable thereafter, and, pursuant to section 252.36(3)(b), Florida Statutes, shall file the order or declaration with the Division of Administrative Hearings within five days of issuance.

D. The Commissioner of the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (“FDACS”) may:

1. Collect needed information from state agencies to support documentation and justification of relief to be sought from the United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) and the United States Small Business Administration (“SBA”) for relief of the agricultural industry.
2. Seek direct assistance and enter into agreements with any and all government entities as may be needed to meet this emergency. FDACS shall notify the State Coordinating Officer prior to execution of such agreements.
3. Suspend the effect of any statute, rule, or order under the jurisdiction of FDACS that would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay any mitigation, response, or recovery action necessary to cope with this emergency. In accordance with section 252.3611(1), Florida Statutes, any such order,

declaration, or other action shall specify each statute or rule being amended or waived, if applicable, and the expiration date for the order or action.

4. Enter orders as may be needed to implement any of the foregoing powers; however, the requirements of sections 252.46 and 120.54(4), Florida Statutes, do not apply to any such orders issued by the State Coordinating Officer. No such order shall remain in effect beyond the expiration of this Executive Order, including any extension thereof.

E. The Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation (“DOT”) may:

1. Waive the hours of service requirements for commercial motor vehicles that enter Florida to provide emergency services or supplies or to transport emergency equipment, supplies, or personnel.

2. Waive the size and weight restrictions for divisible loads on any vehicles transporting emergency equipment, services, supplies, and agricultural commodities and citrus as recommended by the Commissioner of Agriculture, allowing the establishment of alternate size and weight restrictions for all such vehicles for the duration of the emergency. The DOT shall issue permits and such vehicles shall be subject to such special conditions as the DOT may endorse on any such permits. Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to allow any vehicle to exceed weight limits posted for bridges and like structures, or relieve any vehicle or the carrier, owner, or driver of any vehicle from compliance with any restrictions other than those specified in this Executive Order, or from any statute, rule, order, or other legal requirement not specifically waived or suspended herein or by supplemental order by the State Coordinating Officer.

F. The Executive Director of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (“DHSMV”) may waive the hours of service requirements for commercial motor vehicles that enter Florida to provide emergency services or supplies, to transport emergency equipment,

supplies or personnel, or to transport FEMA mobile homes or office style mobile homes into or from Florida.

Section 4. I find that the demands placed upon the funds appropriated to the agencies of the State of Florida and to local agencies are unreasonably great and may be inadequate to pay the costs of coping with this disaster. In accordance with section 252.37(2), Florida Statutes, I direct that sufficient funds be made available, as needed, by transferring and expending moneys from the Emergency Preparedness and Response Fund.

Section 5. All actions taken by the Executive Director of the Division of Emergency Management as the State Coordinating Officer with respect to this emergency before the issuance of this Executive Order are ratified, and he is directed to continue to execute the State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and other response, recovery, and mitigation plans necessary to cope with this emergency.

Section 6. This Executive Order is effective immediately and shall expire sixty (60) days from this date, unless extended.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed, at Tallahassee, this 9th day of February, 2026.



RON DESANTIS, GOVERNOR

ATTEST:


SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED
2026 FEB -9 PM 5:54
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
TALLAHASSEE, FL